

Update on the
Worldwide Ministry
of The HOPE . . .

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Remaining Faithful to Your Mission
What Does it Take?

One morning, years ago, I was having a quiet time with God. Well actually, I was "belly-aching" to God. The English version of The HOPE had been out for quite some time, and we had completed a handful of translations. Most of my production staff had moved on to other things. Production people like exciting new challenges, and cranking out translations of The HOPE was certainly not as creatively challenging as producing it the first time around. In a sense, I felt like I was left holding the bag.

Everywhere I went, well-meaning people asked me, "So, are you working on a new project?" "No we're still working on The HOPE." I would reply. Then I would feel the need to explain that each language version of The HOPE was like a new project, or that writing a 65 lesson study guide was a huge challenge for us. I suppose I was trying to somehow say we were still a creative and productive ministry, even though we weren't working on "a new project." I understood that my significance is not in what I do, but rather in who (or Whose) I am. But still, I felt like my significance was under attack.

So there I was that morning, asking God, "Am I ever going to get to make another film?" On the heels of that question, a thought came into my mind. It didn't sound like my thought. It stopped me completely. "Isn't this what you prayed for? The HOPE is being used around

the world to bring people to Christ." Immediately, I was convicted. "Forgive me, Lord. Yes, that is exactly what I prayed for. That is what is important, and I want to be faithful to it." And to my surprise yet another thought came to me. "Good, you can be creative for eternity, but you can only do this now." Well that certainly put an end to my whining about moving on to the next thing.



His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.' - Matt.25:23
Image courtesy of edifyhim.com

Remaining faithful to the mission . . . what does it take? The apostle Paul addressed this, "I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24, NASB). Unpacking this verse, beginning with the second half first, I believe we can learn

two important lessons from Paul.

First, Paul had a very clear understanding of his mission. I believe God gives each of His children a ministry in life (see Eph.2:10). Our ministry may play out in different ways over a lifetime, but those ways will reflect a common theme because our purpose is tied to how God has wired us and who we are in Him and in His body. Paul's ministry, "received from the Lord Jesus" Himself, was to take the "gospel of the grace of God" to the gentiles (see Acts 24:17-18, Rom.15:20). He did that. And in the process of fulfilling his ministry, he wrote letters to the churches he planted. These letters make up about 1/3 of the New



Testament. Paul's clear understanding of his ministry kept him on track, and blossomed into more than anyone but God could have expected.

Early in the life of Mars Hill, we adopted a mission statement: "The Purpose of Mars Hill is to Use Media to Draw People to Jesus Christ." For over 3 decades our mission has not changed. However, over time I discovered that it was necessary to distinguish between "the mission" and the "mission strategy." I believe that both come from God. In the early years, our mission strategy involved the production of short dramatic films which were used to bring untold thousands of young people to faith in Christ. Later, our mission strategy turned to video curriculum. One of these projects was used to mobilize young people around the world to fulfill their part in the Great Commission. Another, which is still popular today, was created to help people understand who they are "in Christ."

As a ministry, we might have been content with the mission strategy and ministry of previous years. But in the late 90's God began moving our vision toward the world, and particularly the unreached people groups of our world. Today, our mission strategy is focused on the worldwide ministry of The HOPE, now in 50 languages with more than 40 translation projects currently in process. In settings ranging from remote villages to college campuses, and venues from the Internet to satellite television, The HOPE is being used to share the Gospel with people around the world. Over the years, our mission has remained the same though our mission strategy has changed. A clear understanding of both has kept us on track.

Looking now at the first half of Acts 20:24, we see that Paul also had deep understanding of the importance of his

ministry, which then put his sense of personal importance into perspective. "I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus . . ."

If you are to remain faithful to your mission, then you must consider your mission as more important than yourself. Think about the idea of faithfulness. Faithful to what? Faithfulness must have an object, a purpose. We must have something to be faithful to in order to be faithful. If your purpose is small, your faithfulness will be easily challenged. But if your mission is really big, and really, really important, then you will have a great motivation to pursue it, no matter what the cost. It is like the sun. It is so huge that it draws the planets to itself. If your purpose is great, you will gravitate to it. You will do whatever needs to be done to remain faithful. You will prioritize your purpose because nothing is more important, not even yourself.

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On that morning with God years ago, I didn't cave in to the pressure to do something new. I could have justified it within the parameters of our mission statement, but a clear understanding of our mission strategy would not allow it. I could have started a new project, one that might have made me "feel" significant in the eyes of others, but I didn't. And it wasn't because I was so strong. It was because I was gripped by the keeping power of His gaze on me and by the importance of the mission He had given us. More so than by the opinion of the world around me . . . or even my own opinion for that matter. There is only one opinion that ultimately matters.

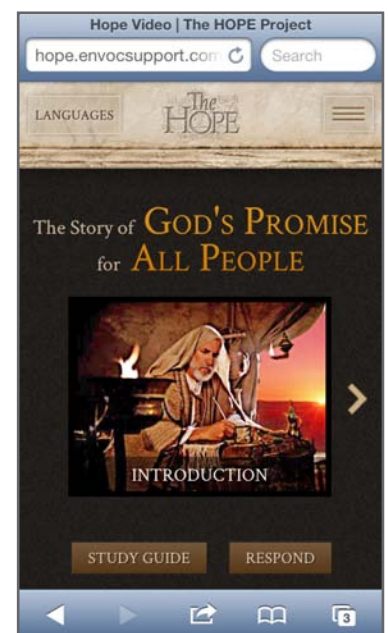
- Until All Have Heard,
Fred Carpenter

The New & Improved HOPE Website

In our 2012 Mid-Year (August) Ministry Update we wrote about our work on a new HOPE website, available in 8 languages with video, study guide and a means for worldwide follow-up with those who request it. In his poem, *To a Mouse (1785)*, Robert Burns wrote, "the best laid plans of Mice and Men oft go awry." The Bible puts it like this, "The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps." - Proverbs 16:9.

To make a long story short, the HOPE website project was marked by complications and delays. In the early spring of this year, we launched a desktop version of the site, but it had lots of issues, and we were still a long way from having tablet and mobile versions. By late spring we made a very hard decision, rather than move forward with a handicapped situation, we decided to start over. By June, we contracted a new developer, Envoc, and in about 3 months we've recovered our lost ground and more!

We now expect (God willing) the new website to be launched within weeks of the release of this update. Yes, that is not unlike what we said last year, but we've had a much different experience this time around and we are in an entirely different place with the project at the writing of this current update. Praise God for His provision and the power to persevere! Be on the lookout for the new site to appear soon at the same address as our current site: www.thehopeproject.com.



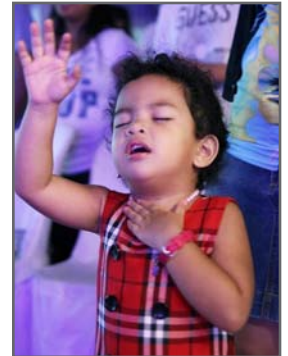
A screen shot - mobile version
of the new HOPE website



The Ministry of The HOPE Around the World - Over 10 Years & Still Growing

Over ten years ago, The HOPE was introduced as a new tool to share the Gospel with anyone, anywhere in the world. Today, over 50 versions of The HOPE are used by Christian workers worldwide to do just that. And with over 40 new translation projects in process, the ministry of The HOPE is still growing. It is not possible within the scope of this update to fully convey how God is now using The HOPE, but the following stories should give you an idea of the type of things for which we are singing His praises . . .

The HOPE in Honduras - In 1900 over 80% of all Christians lived in Europe and North America. By 2005 this number had fallen to under 40%, and will likely fall below 30% before 2050. With the marked decline of Christianity in the Northern Hemisphere, there is a meteoric rise in the Southern. The southern fields are ripe for harvest, and through The HOPE, we are blessed to have a part. In support of a week long Christian outreach in his nation, Honduran President Lobo Sosa signed a bill making July 20, 2013 a national holiday so that his people could take off work to attend evangelistic events held in 18 stadiums across the country. The day before, 2,000 pastors, Christian workers and government leaders gathered in the heart of the Honduran capital to mobilize. Each of them received a copy of The HOPE in Spanish. As ministry born from that gathering unfolds throughout the years, these copies have the potential of being seen by 8 million people!



Old and young in Honduras finding Hope in Christ!



The Creole HOPE is being used across Haiti.

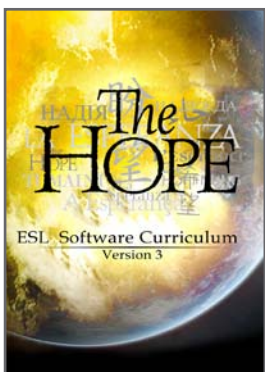
The HOPE in Haiti - The Creole HOPE is being used by several of our partners for evangelism and discipleship throughout Haiti. One of them, Harvest Partners reported that in the first half of this year, 689 people prayed to receive Christ and 554 asked to be discipled after watching The HOPE. Recently we completed a video telling of how Calvary Chapel in Melbourne experienced God in the making of The Creole HOPE. It is a powerful story! View it at www.vimeo.com/marshillproductions/thehopeforhaiti.

International Students - The nations have come to our doorstep. There are now over 750,000 International students in the U.S. The HOPE continues to be a primary tool for Bridges (the International student ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ, "Cru") to reach international students for Christ. This year, Bridges is giving The HOPE to 3,000 students as part of an initiative called "Loving Internationals." Using The HOPE in evangelistic Bible Studies, Bridges says that the metanarrative presentation of the Gospel in The HOPE is ideal for students who lack the underpinnings of a Biblical worldview.



The HOPE is being used on campuses across the U.S., to reach International students like these.

Discipling French Speakers - Over the past year, our ministry partners in France have been using The French HOPE, L'Espoir, in an online video course called Disciple 2.0. The purpose of the 12-day course is to transform lives through study of the Word. 1,255 people have finished the course so far. 94% said they have a better relationship with God. 88% said they feel better equipped in their faith. 41% have recommended the course to a friend.



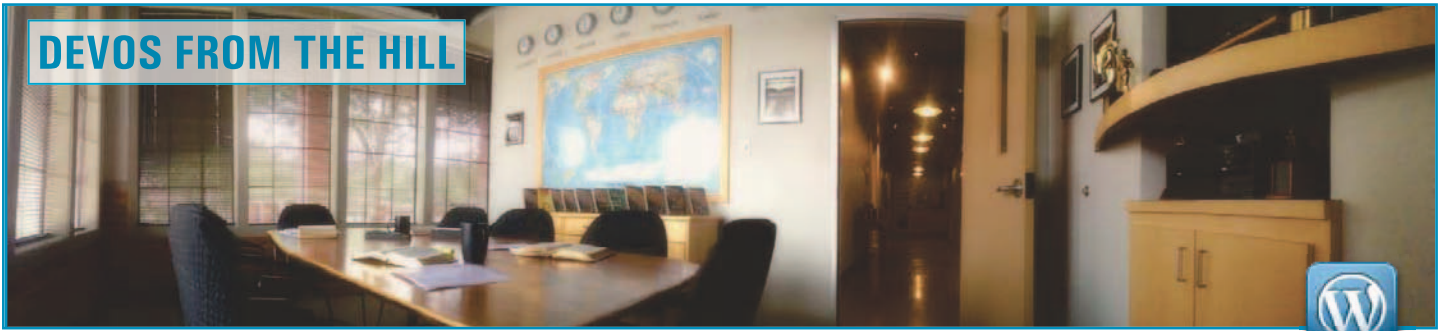
Cover for The HOPE ESL

The HOPE ESL - People around the world want to learn English as a second language. Now in its 6th year of distribution, thousands of missionaries have discovered the value of using The HOPE ESL software curriculum to teach English and share the Gospel. Now in partnership with Campus Crusade / Australia, The HOPE ESL may be downloaded for free at <http://hopedownload.com>.

Broadcasting HOPE - In various regions of the world, The HOPE is now being broadcast regularly in several languages including Arabic, Turkish, French, Mandarin, Thai, German, Russian, Spanish, and English. We are particularly excited about broadcasts into regions of the world that are hostile to the Great Good News of the Gospel.

The HOPE in China - Earlier this year, one of our ministry partners reported having distributed 250,000 copies of the Mandarin HOPE for evangelism and discipleship in China.

DEVOS FROM THE HILL



Be a Part of The HOPE Community

The photo above shows the Mars Hill conference room, where for more than 15 years our staff has met regularly with each other, and with God, for prayer and Bible Study. It is in a sense a birthing room, a place where vision for ministry is born. This is the place where The HOPE first took shape.

This image also appears at the top of our new blog site, www.devosfromthehill.org, where we now publish our weekly staff devotionals. Years ago, it would have been impossible for someone not present to experience what goes on in this room. But today, you can be a part of it every week. We would be so blessed to have you join us!

If used properly, social media can be a powerful tool to build community by facilitating immediate and relevant communication and conversation. For example, the Mars Hill staff is constantly being blessed by news of the amazing things God is doing with The HOPE around the world. But it takes a lot of time to organize, compose and send out email or snail mail updates that capture this activity in a way that will bless you. Consequently, it may not happen and then you miss the blessing of hearing what God is doing. With social media on the other hand, a story can be posted on Facebook or a quick bit of news or praise can be posted on Twitter with little effort. That means you can get news while it is still news. You can experience a bit of what we experience when God does something or shows us something that amazes us.

Our goal with social media is that God will be magnified and you will be encouraged. If you'd like to be a part of The HOPE community (and the action) then please connect with us! If you have a question, email us at hopeinfo@mars-hill.org.

Facebook Page - www.facebook.com/TheHOPEforAll

WordPress Devotional Blog Site - www.devosfromthehill.org

Twitter - <https://twitter.com/TheHOPEforAll>

Vimeo - <https://vimeo.com/marshillproductions>

YouTube - <http://www.youtube.com/thehopevideo>

Linkedin - <http://www.linkedin.com/company/mars-hill-productions>



Networking, Mobilizing & Community Building to Advance the Great Commission

As God has grown the ministry of The HOPE, He has also increased our opportunities to help facilitate Great Commission activity on an even broader level. In the past year we've been blessed to serve in meaningful roles in several events; each of them helping to further the global cause of Christ in unique ways.

In the fall of 2012, we had a key role in the Houston Issachar Summit. This gathering, the second to be held in the U.S., was part of a new initiative to mobilize

the Church to complete the Great Commission in our generation. 300 people attended; 40 from Mars Hill.

In April, Mars Hill President, Fred Carpenter, was invited to participate in the Forum of Bible Agencies International annual meeting. It was an honor for Fred to engage with CEOs of organizations such as SIL, the Seed Co, the American Bible Society, Pioneers Bible Translators, etc. Mars Hill was invited because of our role in Bible engagement.

In addition to these events, individual staff have participated in several mission conferences and have accepted a number of speaking engagements. Whenever we are invited to present the ministry of The HOPE, we always try to cast a vision for the Great Commission that goes beyond The HOPE. We are passionate about helping people find their place in God's glorious plan to reach the nations!



The HOPE is a project of Mars • Hill, a non-profit ministry dedicated to ministry through media. For more than 30 years, award-winning Mars • Hill films and videos have been used around the world to introduce thousands of people to Jesus Christ.

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